Anecdota Oxoniensia

TEXTS, DOCUMENTS, AND EXTRACTS
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SEMITIC SERIES. PART X

THE LETTERS OF ABU 'L-ALA
EDITED FROM THE EXISTING MANUSCRIPT
WITH THE HELP OF THE AUTHOR BY ALCOBACHE, AND WITH
TRANSLATION, NOTES, INDEXES, AND BIOGRAPHY, BY
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PREFACE.

The present edition of the Letters of Abu T-Alâ was undertaken several years ago, when the editor, impressed by the high estimate formed of Abu T-Alâ by Von Kremer, thought that many Arabists would be glad to have access to the poet’s correspondence. Through the kindness of the eminent Orientalist, Prof. M. De Goeje, the Leyden MS. was twice deposited in the Bodleian Library for a period of

1 Von Kremer speaks of Abu T-Alâ at length in his Kulturgeschichte (1872), II. 386-396, and in his Abhandlung über die philologischen Gedichte des Abu T-Alâ (Sitzungsberichte der Kaiser-lichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien, Hist.-phil. Klasse, vol. CVII, ix, Abhandlungen, 1896). He also translated many poems from the Insititagit at different times: Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft, XXIX, 393-394, XXXI, 42-43, XXXII, 451-452, XXXVIII, 496-497; Sitzungsberichte, vi, 392-393; XXXIV, 636-642. Of other writers who have dealt with Abu T-Alâ the first place must be assigned to Ch. Rüti, De Abu T-Alâ Arab poetus nullus ac carminum, Bern, 1843. Poems from the Sạb al-Ḳadêm have been translated by F. J. Furnils (Douglas, 1838), Collins (in Explorations Arabic Grammar, 1840), De Sacy (Chrestomathie Arabe, 2nd ed., 1827, III. 381-411), J. Voës (Histoire Musulmane et Abolés carnâme des lettres, 1847). Poems from both collections are translated by Von Humbert in his Litteraturgeschichte der Araber, VI. 909-972. Attention was first called to the poet in this country by Pococke, Specimen Historiae Arabum, p. 41; the notice by Abu T-ṬUGÁ, Annals, ed. Reiske, III. 185-189, has been frequently exemplified, e.g. by Weh, Geschichte der Schriften, III. 71. A highly interesting note was contributed by J. Goldschlager to vol. XXXIX of the Z. d. M. G., and the same writer in his Abhandlungen sur arabische Philosophie (1868) quotes the Letters. Those who feel pleasure in correcting errors would find ample opportunity in many of these works: even De Sacy translates "Gage des Frères," and Von Kremer, S. B. CVIII, 94, makes the astounding assertion that 1 some of Abu T-Alâ’s biographers knew of such a work as al-Rṣaul and Ghâfīr, that it is nowhere quoted, and must be another name for the Laskınigid;" although Goldschlager, i.e., in an article dealing with Von Kremer’s translations, had produced a passage from the book in question.
weeks for the editor’s use. In 1894 however, when most of the text was already in type, there appeared at Beyrut an edition of the Letters, fully pointed and accompanied by a brief commentary, the work of Shihhīn Effendi ‘Atiyyah, clearly a most competent scholar, whose book might seem to render a European edition unnecessary. The present work was however continued on the following grounds: (1) although the Beyrut editor’s MS. is occasionally better than the Leyden MS., it has a large lacuna, all the Letters occupying pp. 38-55 of the present edition being lost; (2) although the Beyrut editor’s commentary is deserving of praise, it nevertheless leaves much that is difficult unexplained; (3) the addition of a translation and indices will, perhaps, render the book more accessible to those interested in the East than the Beyrut edition has rendered it.

For the text then I have employed the Warner MS. described in the Catalogue of the Leyden Library (2nd ed., pp. 192-193), with occasional corrections from the Beyrut edition; some of these will be found in an Appendix. The whole of Letter II is to be found in the Todākkirah of Ibn Hanḍūn (oh. circ. 525 a.h.; MS. Marsh. 316), and in the Suḥh Al-
'Aṣār of Al-Kalākhshandī (oh. 821; MS. Marsh. 317); since Kalākhshandī was acquainted with Ibn Hanḍūn’s work, it is probable that the former got his copy from the latter: but from both these MSS. little help can be derived. Al-Bākhārī, the author of the continuation of the Yādmat al-Dahr, of which there is a copy in the British Museum, makes a reference to the same letter, but does not cite any of it. These are the only writers, (other than bibliographers, known to me 1, who were acquainted with this collec-

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1 Von Hammer, J. c. 966, states that a work in the Leyden Library, called “Jāmikat al-Falāḥ,” contains a letter by Abū T’ārūf occupying eight folios, and quoting thirty-six points. The list of names (many seriously mutilated), which Von Hammer procures to give, makes it probable that this is Letter XXVIII. The account of this work given in the new edition of the Leyden Catalogue shows that it contains much that bears on our author. ‘Alā‘ī Khalīfī’s notice of the Letters is clearly taken from Al-Dulābih.

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1 Letter XXXVI, p. 125.

Many pages will illustrate the difficulty that has been noticed; one example may be quoted here. On p. 74, speaking of his affection for his correspondent, the author says: تُتُبِّعُ الْوُلَادَةَ تَذَكَّرُ الْخَلَيْمَةَ أَخَوِيُّ الْوُلَادَةَ وَتَقَلِّدُ النَّافِعَ لَبْنِيِّ حَالِد. The first part, ’I think of his times as
PREFACE.

the weaned child thinks of its mother’s breast," is taken from a line of Abu ‘l-Hind quoted in the *Kāmil* of Mubarrad (Egyptian ed. II. 42):—

لَمْ يَعْدِ اللَّهُ رَبَّ الْأَمْيَامِ عِنْدَ هُذَا النَّارِ

As however it contains no difficulty, the source has not been cited. The remainder of the passage could never be made out without the help of the source whence it is taken; a line quoted in the same work (Eg. 1. 395; Wright, p. 284) as "the poet’s:"—

لاَ يَعْدِ اللَّهُ رَبَّ الْأَمْيَامِ عِنْدَ هُذَا النَّارِ

"May God, Lord of men, by the milk, not remove the children of Khalîlid"; the line being quoted to show that *milh* sometimes means ‘milk’ or the colostrum relation, which, for some purposes, counts in Mohammedan law as equal to consanguinity.

In this and similar cases those whose opinion is worth having are by no means likely to condemn the rendering before they have investigated its ground.

The original being in rhymed prose, to which the sense is often sacrificed, there is much in the translation that will necessarily seem pointless or insipid. No attempt has been made to reproduce the rhyme of the original, rhymed prose not being with us a recognized form of composition; but occasionally English proverbs or plays on words have been substituted for those in the text.

To the Letters there is appended the Life of Abu ‘l-‘Alî by Al-Dhahabi, which is more copious than that by Ibn Khallikan, and also follows different sources; it is taken from the copy of Al-Dhahabi’s

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1 We also learn that Abu ‘l-‘Alî (rightly or wrongly) read *madimilh*, not, as the printed editions, *nasmīlah*. The passage whence the verse comes is given in Khalifîn al-salih IV. 844, where the opinions of the ancient critics about its authorship and meaning are stated. The wish implies that the ‘children of Khalîlid’ were dead (see on Hâmidah, p. 493). The verse is also quoted by Kekhû, *Commentaires sur le Dictionnaire d’Al-Ey배*, p. 91, printed as above.

History of Islam in the British Museum. The Biography which follows this Preface has been compiled from it and also from such other works bearing on the subject as were within the author’s reach. One of these is the Biography prefixed to the Boukî edition of the commentary on the *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* called *Ta’wîrîh*; the author of which seems to have drawn his bow at a venture when he refers the reader to the *Yattmat al-Dahr* for further information; for not only do the printed copies of the *Yattmaḥ* say nothing of Abu ‘l-‘Alî, but the existence of a notice of the poet in Bâkhari’s supplement shows that there never was one in the *Yattmaḥ*. Bâkhari is however nearly as much inferior to Tha’alibi as the latter is inferior to the author of the *Aghānî*. The Biography by Sa’âdî contains some of the same matter as the others, but preserves some valuable notices which are not found elsewhere. The list of Abu ‘l-‘Alî’s writings appended to Al-Dhahabi’s Biography gives it special value. It will not escape the reader however that there is a discrepancy between the number of titles given and the number which Abu ‘l-‘Alî asserted that they reached. The discrepancies between this list and Sa’âdî’s are collected in the Appendix.

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1 The information given by this writer is similar to that quoted by Goldschîn, L.c., from a Leipzic MS.

2 In the Bâkhari MS. (Sahîh Arab. A. 39). The text of this volume is exceedingly corrupt, but can often be restored from other sources.
CHIEF ABBREVIATIONS, ETC.

F. W. = Faruq al-wasfâyát.
Laz. = Lazímâyát of Abu Yâlha (chymes up to 9 cited by the edition of Cairo, 1891; the rest by the edition of Bombay, 1293).
S. L. = Sahîl al-Zamâd of Abu t-Álî (cited by the edition of Bâlâk, 1386).
Mâdâni's 'Proverbs' are ordinarily cited by the pages of the edition of Bârire, 1312, called: شرائط النزل في وجوه الأحوال. For Ibn al-Áshâr and Mâdâni's Mirâj al-dhâlikh the edition of Bâlâk, 1299, has been employed; for Ibn Kâtabi's Kitâb al-mu'arrif that of Cairo, 1300; and for Dimrit and Kâsurin that of Cairo, 1309.
L. A. = Lázim al-Árâb.
T. A. = Tawjih al-Batîtâ.
The sign of prolongation is sometimes omitted in the transliterations of proper names.

BIOGRAPHY

OF

ABU 'L-ÁLÁ' AL-MA'ARRI.

Abu 'l-Álî,1 Ahmad son of Abdallah son of Sulaiman was born at Ma'arrat al-Nu'mán in Syria in the year 973 A.D., corresponding with the year 562 A.H. Ma'arrat, called by European travellers1 Marrâh, is a town somewhat South of Aleppo or Halab, at a distance of one day's (or more accurately, nineteen hours') journey. Originally, it is said, it was called Ma'arrat of Usôr, but after the conquest of Syrian by the Moslems it was called Ma'arrat of Nu'mán, after Nu'mán son of Bashîr,2 who was governor of Usôr for the Umayyâd Caliph Marwan ibn Al-Hakam, and one of whose sons died and was buried at Ma'arrat. Such, at least, is the account of the name given by Al-Balâdhuri;3 but some of the authorities4 are not satisfied with it, and suggest other and less probable explanations. The second part of the name was in any case given the town in order to distinguish it from another Ma'arrat, also in this region, and called Ma'arrat

1 The custom of giving ba'ayn to persons who had no children is too familiar to need illustration. An earlier Abu 'l-Álî of Ma'arrat is mentioned in Aghâzî XII. 81 and an Abu 'l-Álî of Tâbilk, Aghâzî VII. 96. Another Abu 'l-Álî related to Abu 'l-Álî, 'Ali ibn Ja'far is mentioned by Ilîkari in the poems of Ma'arrat.
2 So K. Prosdoc, Walpole, and others.
3 A long and interesting account of this person, who was famous as a poet as well as a statesman, is given in Aghâzî XIV. 159 sqq.
4 E.g., De Geniez, p. 131.
5 So Yîhilî, x. v. It would seem more probable that Al-Nu'mán was the name of a god.
Marin. Of the first part of the name the geographers give a variety of derivations, to which our author adds a humorous one; but it is doubtless the Syriac מַרְעָנָה, "a cave," to which Maghabrah would etymologically correspond in Arabic. The province in which it was situated was called in Abu 'l-'Ali's time عَرَاش, or 'the Forts,' a name which, according to some authorities, denoted a very vast expanse of territory, while others limit it to the region between Halbeh and Hamath; and others, again, expressly exclude these districts from it. In our author's time it was subject to the governor of Halbeh.

The whole region seems to have been peopled from pre-Islamic days by the tribe Tanukh, whose migrations form an interesting chapter in the mythology of the Arabs; and the range of mountains drained by the Orontes, which further south becomes the Lebanon, was called after their name. Ma'arrah, in particular, was said to be inhabited by families descended from this tribe, and from such a family our author claimed to have descended.

The account repeatedly given by Abu 'l-'Ali of both the physical and intellectual condition of his native town is somewhat hasty, but it is not confirmed by other writers, save in one detail of its being destitute of running water. Ibn Haqlal, who died about the time when Abu 'l-'Ali was born, speaks of Ma'arrah as 'a rich and pros-
if the dirges in which he is lamented is to be believed. He would seem to have died when Abu 'l-'Ala was young. From the poem that has been quoted he appears to have been a modest and retiring man—indeed it quaintly suggests that on the Day of Judgement he would try to avoid the crush. One of his brothers survived till the days of Sulaymân Ibn Mirdâs (about 410), if any reliance may be placed on an otherwise apocryphal anecdote.

We have one prose lament and two verse laments by Abu 'l-'Ala over his mother, who survived till his thirty-seventh year. She belonged to the family of Sulakhab, some members of which would seem to have filled posts of importance in Syrian towns; but although we learn that one of them was resident in Damascus and another in Halaq, the contemporary chronicles of those cities apparently do not notice their existence. They were great travellers, if the poem addressed to one of them do not exaggerate; and the relation between Abu 'l-'Ala and his maternal uncle appears from the letters to have been exceedingly close and affectionate.

Both these families would seem to have entertained to some extent those liberal opinions in religious matters for which the author became notorious. In a poem written by him late in life, he presents himself as being upbraided for having neglected the pilgrimage, one of the essential duties of a Moslem; and his answer is that neither his father nor his cousin nor his maternal uncle had performed it. If, he argues, they are forgiven, he may expect forgiveness too; if they are lost in consequence, he would sooner share their fate.

At an early age—the biographers say, at the beginning of the year 397 when Abu 'l-'Ala was three-and-a-half years old—he had an attack of small-pox, which not only left his face scarred, but caused the complete loss of the sight of his left eye, and the partial loss of that of the right. How long he retained any sort of vision is not certain; the frequent references in his writings to stars, flowers, and the forms of the Arabic letters imply that he could see a little at least some years after this calamity, and of this there is some external evidence; but it is not probable that he obtained much, or indeed any, of his learning by reading. As a sort of compensation for the loss of his sight he was gifted with a prodigious memory, of which tales, not to be taken as literally true, are told by his contemporaries, which, even after allowance has been made for exaggeration, give evidence of extraordinary retentiveness. His pupil Abu Zakariyyâ of Tabriz asserted that a conversation between himself and one of his countrymen in the dialect of Azerbaijan was repeated verbatim by Abu 'l-'Ala, though ignorant of the dialect; and similar tales are told by others. The letters, which abound in quotations, enable us to gauge the power of his memory better than those wonder-loving narrators. His acquaintance with the literature of his nation was certainly great, but it was wanting in accuracy. Those who study his quotations will perceive that he could no more than others less gifted afford to leave his references unverified.

From his twelfth year, he tells one of his correspondents, he had sought neither instruction nor money from any inhabitant of Syria or Irân. His life therefore falls into three periods: that of his youthful studies, which terminated in 393; his life in Ma‘arráh ending in 404 with his visit to Baghdad, which lasted from 404 to 410; and his seclusion in Ma‘arráh, which lasted from his return from Baghdad to his death.

His first instruction, we are told, was from his father; he also studied tradition in Ma‘arráh under Yahyâ Ibn Múrûr, "of a distinguished family," the rest of his education was obtained in other Syrian towns. Owing to the fame of the Hamdanid prince Salif.
This may have been so: but the Christian monk is a person who figures in so many of these narratives that we are justified in suspecting the truth of this statement. The scepticism for which Abu 'l-Allāh afterwards became famous can be accounted for by other causes than the suggestions of a monk. The poet whom Abu 'l-Allāh took for his model in his early compositions, and who has, ever since he wrote, been the most popular of the Arabic poets, Al-Mutanabbi, more than once in his early writings speaks with insufficient respect of the Prophets, and even his mature poems are not quite free from the taint of unorthodoxy; albeit the victories of his patron Saif al-da'ūlah over the Christians not unfrequently warm him to religious fervour and fanaticism. But by Abu 'l-Allāh's time events had changed. What he witnessed was a three-cornered duel between two Mohammadan powers and one Christian power: and of this war Haleb formed the centre. More than once in Abu 'l-Allāh's time Haleb owed its deliverance from Mohammadan conquerors to Christian allies.

Abu 'l-Allāh's studies were the natural preparation for a lucrative career to which blindness was no obstacle. In the Aghānī we read of many blind poets, and indeed of one whose blindness was brought about by the same malady which deprived Abu 'l-Allāh of his sight. The custom of bestowing large sums in return for complimentary odes was inherited by the Caliphs from the pre-Islamic dynasties; and what the Caliphs did on a large scale was also done by their ministers, provincial governors, and in general by men of wealth and station in a scarcely less lavish fashion. The reader of the Kītāb al-Aghānī is astounded by the size of the gratuities earned by verses often of moderate merit; and yet the statements of this work often rest on excellent evidence, and the autobiography of Unṣūrī of 

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1 In Aghānī XV. 113 there is no account of an earlier controversy about the merits of the poets of different countries; but this was in a larger extent political.
2 Ibn Khallikān I. 127; Yaḥyā ibn Dāhir I. 76.
3 Ebn, p. 76.
4 Ebn Al-A'ubī, Peda Māshriq. 66 b.
5 Ebn, p. 175.
6 Abu 'l-Allāh, Peda Māshriq. 66 b.
7 Ebn, p. 174.
8 S. Z., p. 303; S. Z., p. 303. Antiorth was at this time in the possession of the Greeks.
10 The custom of lending libraries to strangers is well known; Abu 'l-Allāh's contemporaries Abu Nāṣr al-Maṣṣūli left his to the students of Annūr and Mārīzūkī (the contemporary Abu Nāṣr al-Maṣṣūli left his to the students of Annūr and Mārīzūkī). Notice of the price of books at this time (Ibn Khallīkān I. 69). A copy of the Jamāli of Ibn Dāhir rented sixty dinars (ibid. II. 459); 'A copy of the Edwans of Ja'fār fruished ten dinars' (Ibn Dāhir I. 79) show that such belongings were very necessary. For the fortunes made by book-sellers see Ibn Khallīkān I. 79.
11 Ebn, p. 141. Yaḥyā ibn Dāhir has the same.
Yemeni, who flourished in the middle of the sixth century of Islam, is a record of parallel experiences. One is inclined to wonder, when studying these narratives, that the profession of poet was not more overstocked in Mohammedan states than it appears to have been; for in no other was the disproportion greater between effort and remuneration. There were however one or two objections. In the first place the profession was to many people’s thinking not respectable. The three great poets of the Abbasid period all beg in a manner that to almost any taste is shameful and disgusting; and some of their fellow-craftsmen condescended to even greater humiliation. Even where the lex aris did not enforce this, the only encomia that had commercial value were of a sort that bore no relation to the truth. Besides the degradation that this calling entailed, it was not free from danger. Fortune was fickle, and it rarely happened that a patron had the will and the power to subsidize the same encomiast for a great length of time; and although some of the poets wisely retired from the business when they had “made their pile,” most of them squandered their gains as speedily as they were acquired, and were constantly in search of fresh patrons. When, after serving a patron, one of them wished to enter the service of his enemy or his murderer, the celebrity of the ode that had under the former régime won him fortune, now stood in his way; and though some could, owing to their talent, command any patronage, others could never explain with grace that their earlier compliments had been intended not for their patron’s person, but for his strong-box.

Although Abu l-‘Alā repeatedly asserts that his poems were not written for hire, it is nevertheless probable that he originally intended to follow the profession that has been outlined, and indeed the admiration of Mutanabbi that appears in his early efforts makes it likely that he at one time intended to imitate that poet’s career as well as his style. He might seem to have started in a manner not unworthy of his model: for, as Dr. Rieu has pointed out, his earlier panegyrics are addressed to Sa‘īd al-daudah, the Hamdanide prince who was proclaimed ruler of Haleb in 381, and probably belong to the years 382 and 384; while the next are addressed to the two generals sent by the Fatimid Caliph to oust Sa‘īd al-daudah from his government. We learn however from one of the chronicles that during this war Ma‘arrah at one time dissociated its fortune from those of Haleb; Abu l-‘Alā’s muse may therefore have but followed the politics of his native town. Although his Sa‘īd al-Zand contains not a few encomia, those that have been quoted are the only poems addressed to men of high station who would be expected to reward them. From one poem however admitted into the Sa‘īd al-Zand the portion containing the encomium has been deliberately omitted; and in another the identity of the prince eulogized is carefully concealed. In a later composition, addressed to some men of note, he gives it to be understood that he seeks no remuneration. The assumption that he commenced a career as professional poet, but almost immediately abandoned it, will accord sufficiently well with the assertion that from his twentieth year he had lived and studied independently.

Returning to Ma‘arrah after the termination of his studies he appears to have been assigned from a trust-fund an income of thirty dinars yearly—a smaller sum than was often earned by a single encomium; and this, we are told, he shared with the attendant whom his blindness rendered indispensable. At a time when the governor of Haleb was carrying on war against the Egyptian forces and calling in the aid of the Greeks, we need not ask how it came about that any of the inhabitants of towns subject to Haleb were so impoverished. Probably owing to the sacrifices demanded by Sa‘īd al-daudah and his mayor of the palace Lu‘lu‘, Ma‘arrah in 386, at the instance of 996 a certain Rıyāḥ al-Sufi, rebelled and joined the Egyptians; and the inhabitants of Ma‘arrah probably owed their deliverance to the Egyptian minister to whose son the First and Second Letters are addressed.

To the period between 386 and 389 many of the poems included 188

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1 Rui Al’A’din (Paris MS.); see below.
2 S. Z. 124.
3 S. Z. 125, 1: 5.
4 S. Z. II. 66.
5 Sch. p. 174.

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1 Rui Al’A’din (Paris MS.); see below.
2 S. Z. 124.
3 S. Z. 125, 1: 5.
4 S. Z. II. 66.
5 Sch. p. 174.
in the Saḥā bi-Ẓān and apparently belong. It seems clear, too, that the
people of Maʿarrat by Al-Maghribī; who probably, when restored to
favour at the court of the Egyptian Caliph, took that opportunity of
renewing his relations with the town to which he was already
favourably known. The fact of Abu ʿU-ʿAllā resuming his residence with
his fellow-citizens therein—
show that he had by that time (near the end of the period with
which we are occupied) acquired a position of consequence in his
native town. This position would be confirmed by the favourable
reception accorded to his communication. For although Al-Maghribī's
fame as a politician was not of the best sort, the importance of the
posts offered him shows that as a writer he ranked very high.

The governor of Ḥalab, Lūṭ, had before the end of this period
consented to be the vassal of the Egyptian Caliph; in 996 he died
and was succeeded by his son, who for several years had shared the
government with him. Before Abu Naṣr's accession, however, the
event had happened which led to Abu ʿU-ʿAllā's journey to Baghdad,
the governor of Ḥalab, we are told, 'disputed the poet's pension',
and he went to Baghdad to maintain his claim to it. This statement
is not free from difficulty; for the governor of Ḥalab at this time
was not dependent on Baghdad, but on Cairo. We may, however,
believe that the loss of his pension was the reason for the poet's
quitting Maʿarrat, without supposing that he went to Baghdad to
recover it. His letters and poems say nothing about the pension;
but it is clear from them that he went to Baghdad with the idea of
staying there permanently. It is not unnatural that a man who had
worn some provincial reputation should have wished to try his fortune
at the capital; we know of many others who went to Baghdad on
a similar errand. The project was counteracted, if not discouraged,
by the poet's mother, and the expenses of the journey defrayed by
one of his maternal uncles. He even commenced a letter to the
Kāfi Abu ʿU-ʿAyāb Tahlī, originally of Tabarīsht, but resident in
Baghdad, informing him of his intended journey to the latter's happy
haunt. The poet 'was never finished so as to reach its destination';
Abu ʿU-ʿAllā may have learnt before sending it something of the
character of the 'happy hall' of a man who seems to have belonged
to a class who, 'when they washed their fine garments, used their
houses as clothes till the washing was over'. But the ideas in the
letter were worth employing for another occasion: and that occasion
soon presented itself.

Mr. Cowper in his work T hrough Turkish Arabia tells us of three
ways by which it is possible to reach Baghdad from Aleppo; in going
Abu ʿU-ʿAllā followed the first of these, i.e. the Euphrates Valley
route. Mr. Cowper in his journey went by land, following the course
of the Euphrates; but from Mr. Ainsworth's N arrative of the Euphrates
Expedition it would appear that the river is navigable as far as
Anbār, and Abu ʿU-ʿAllā descended the Euphrates in a vessel provided
by his uncle. Where he embarked is not certain; if he went by
Aleppo, Kāfīs is the point at which the road touches the river. The
vessel got safely to Anbār, where a canal leads to the Tigris, forming
the most direct route to Baghdad; but for some reason this route
was not practicable at the time, and the vessel proceeded down the
river to Kaḍīyyāh, with the intention of reaching Baghdad some

1 See note 2 to Letter 1.
2 Inf. p. 175.
3 The date of the journey to Baghdad can be fixed by the statement in Letter VII (p. 47), that
he left Baghdad in the last third of December; for all authorities agree that he left Baghdad in
May 1216 (400). The author of the note appended to Tahā's commentary on the S.Z., probably Tahā
himself, says that he stayed in Baghdad one year and seven months; that he started in May, and
arrived in Baghdad in September. The Euphrates Valley route is estimated at twenty-five days (Cowper,
Sept. p. 18); this would make Abu ʿU-ʿAllā to have started at the beginning of July. But we know that
he was seriously delayed on the way; and then Tahā's statements are shown to be inaccurate.
4 The apparent discrepancy between his having started in 400, and left Baghdad in Kāfīs in 400,
also suggests that we may have two journeys; and this opinion, which appears in Ibn Khallīkān, was adopted by Van Kemenet.
other way. At Kādījīyāh it was seized by the 'Sultān's' officers, and the poet was left to proceed to Baghdad as well as he might.

He found a lodging in an old part of the city called 'Suwalākht ibn Ghalib', where other men of letters had resided. Complimentary verses were sent him by the Kādījī ibn Tāyibī (which he improvised replies to) Abu 'l-Tāyibī was a pupil of Abu 'l-Ḥāmid al-Jasāṣī, then in the zenith of his fame as a theologian, and ever since known as 'the Professor' par excellence in works on metaphysics and the principles of jurisprudence. Abu 'l-Ḥāmid had recently received a mark of the Sultan's favour, having been rescued by him in one of the religious riots so common at this time in Baghdad, and restored to his mosque. It is probable that it was by the Kādī's mediation that Abu 'l-Allāh solicited Abu 'l-Ḥāmid's services in the recovery of the confiscated vessel. With this view Abu 'l-Allāh addressed to him the poem 5 wherein the above notice of his voyage has been taken, embodying the ideas he had intended for the Kādī, with learned allusions which may well have puzzled its recipient. Abu 'l-Ḥāmid was either unable or unwilling to perform the service required of him, which was afterwards rendered by a certain Abu Ahmad Al-Hakākī, who is thanked for the favour in a poem written after the author's return to Ma'arrārah 6.

As in ancient Rome, so in the great Muslimian cities, public recitation was the mode whereby men of letters made their talents known to their contemporaries. From very early times it had been customary to employ the mosques for this purpose; and in Abu 'l-Allāh's time poems were recited in the mosque of Al-Manṣūr at Baghdad 7. Better accommodation was, however, provided by the Macceneasis, who took a pride in collecting savants and littérateurs

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1 Ibn Khallīkān, A.D. 441.
2 Ibn Khallīkān, A.D. 434; Yūnus, 91, Dahr II, 299-323. The biography by Sāfīūn is far fuller and more instructive. He was in exile in 433.
3 This narrative is told in the biography prefixed to the poems of Al-Shāfī 'Alī Al-Rāzī, Bayān, 1907 a.d. It is said there of Al-Warrā 'Alī Al-Makki 'Alī; but this person was dead before Al-Rāzī's birth.
4 Note that this, and not Al-Rāzī, is the right spelling.

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in their houses. The biographer Ibn Khallīkān gives a description of the gatherings held at the house of Abu 'l-Allāh's contemporary Ya'qūb ibn Khuṣ, Vizier of the Fathīmīde Caliph Al-'Azīz in Cairo, which illustrates the plan followed by the wealthy patrons of literature: 'Every sixth Thursday night he would hold a sāḥīb, in which he would recite his compositions, and thither would flock the Kādīs, the Jurisconsults, the Readers of the Korān, the Grammarians, all sorts of men of eminence, and the chief Aseccars, the Ministers and the Traditionalists; and when his recitation was over, the poets would rise and recite their encomiums of him,' 8c. The Macceneasis of Baghdad shortly before Abu 'l-Allāh went there was Abu Naṣr Sābūr ibn Ardāshīr, reputedly Vizier to the Buṣrīd prince Bahāl al-daulah, then supreme in the Eastern Caliphate. Sābūr's liberality to poets was such that Thālūthī in his literary history finds it necessary to devote a whole chapter to his encomiasts. A story told, probably, of him illustrates the manners of the time too well to be omitted here. To one of his encomiasts, the Sharīf Al-Rāzī, on the occasion of a birth in the Sharīf's house, he sent a dish containing 3,000 dinars. Al-Rāzī sent it back, saying that he did not receive presents. Sābūr sent it once again, saying it was intended for the nurses. Al-Rāzī returned it again, saying that in the family of the Prophet which he represented none but women of the family were employed on such occasions. Sābūr sent it a third time, requesting Al-Rāzī to distribute, it among the men of letters who attended his Academy; for Al-Rāzī had taken a house for the use of his admirers, to which he had given that name. One of these persons took a single dinar, broke off a piece, and returned the dinar to the dish. This, he said, was to pay for some oil which he had taken on credit from a dealer the night before, when, owing to the absence of the Custodian, he could not get at the stores of the Academy. Thereafter Al-Rāzī had a number of keys made, one
of which was given to each member of the Academy, so that they could get what they required when the Custodian was away.

This anecdote illustrates the duties of the Custodian of an Academy, and also shows that membership was a valuable privilege. Now Al-Kadji's Academy would seem to have been modelled on that founded by Sāhibī which bore the same name, and which was celebrated by Abu l-'Alī both in verse and prose.

It was founded in the year 481, in a part of Baghdad called 'Between the Two Walls' in the quarter Karīk. Expense was spared in furnishing it with a choice library; there were a hundred copies of the Koran written by the Banu Mūkhrās, and 2,400 volumes belonging to other departments of literature, most of them either autographs, or such as had been in the possession of famous men. Sāhibī provided funds for the maintenance of the establishment, and put the whole under the direction of two members of the family of Ali, one of whom, Abu Abdullah Al-Baghawi, was alive after Abu l-'Alī’s visit to Baghdad. Although the fortunes of Sāhibī were variable, his institution was left un molested till his death in 416, and survived till 451, when the part of Baghdad in which it was situated was burnt, and the books and other treasures became the object of official and private plunder.

In Abu l-'Alī’s time it was a rendezvous for men engaged in literary pursuits, and provided a place for literary and musical entertainments. Among Abu l-'Alī’s acquaintance two are given the title ‘Custodian of the Academy in Baghdad’. One of these persons, 'Abd al-Salām of Bayrah, who in any case held some official post at Baghdad, and whose grammatical and geographical studies were famous, was on terms of warm friendship with Abu l-'Alī, as we know from another

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1 Ibn Khalt, I, 172.
2 Ibn Khalt, I, 159.
3 Isbair, p. 48. See also p. 49, ed.
4 Yāḥyā Ibn Khalt, I, 7.
5 Sa'dī, k. v., Sāhibī. On the style of writing alluded to, see Ibn Khalt, II, 80.
6 Yāḥyā, n. s., b. Ibn Al-Azhir, anno 490.
7 Sa'dī, i.e.
8 Ibn Al-Azhir, anno 441.
9 Sa'dī’s words are جزاء فاتحة فاتحة في الأذكار, cf Ibn Khalt, I, 295.

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source 1 besides the prose and verse epistles addressed to him. He had attended the lectures of the younger Sāhibī; now we know that Abu l-'Alī was commissioned by his uncle 2 to get a copy of one of the elder Sāhibī’s works when in Baghdad; but whether this quest led to the poet’s acquaintance with 'Abd al-Salām or whether it was formed through the mediation of the poet’s fellow-tribesman and pupil Abu l-'Kāsim Ibn Al-Mubāinh Al-Tārākhi, 3 or in any other way, we do not know. The other Custodian of the Academy, who certainly had a right to that title, was a certain Abu Mansūr, who apparently is only known to us from Abu l-'Alī’s writings 4. The friendship of these persons could not fail to be of use to a man who came to Baghdad on such an errand as Abu l-'Alī’s.

At Sāhibī’s Academy he probably met most of those persons of literary renown with whom is known to have been on friendly terms. He experienced some unkind treatment, as when, attending a lecture by Abu l-'Hasan Al-Rahīmī, 5 regarded as the greatest grammarian of the time, then in his seventy-second year, he was admitted with the un courteous phrase 'Bid the Isbāḥ enter?', Isbāḥ being Syriac slang for ‘blind’. 6 On this occasion Abu l-'Alī left the room indignantly; but on another, in Al-Murtaḍī’s saloon, he turned an insult into an opportunity for displaying some rare erudition, which brought him into note. 7 On the whole it appears that the reception accorded to his Sāḥīf al-Zand was favourable, 8 and that the savants of Baghdad treated him as one of themselves.

Doubtless his fame had to some extent preceded him, and his relations with eminent men of letters like Al-Maghribī and Abu l-'Kāsim Ibn Jalālāt 9 (himself a poet whom Sāhibī had patronised 10)

1 Ibn Khalt, II, 490.
2 See Letters X and XI.
3 That he was a friend of 'Abd al-Salām we know from S. Z. II, 112. On him and his family see Ibn Khalt, I, 153.
4 Letter XIX with addition.
5 See ibid. I, 423.
6 Yāḥyā spells the word مسلم و مسلم. Greek Ἐσπαθ (7).
7 Yāḥyā, ibid.
8 Ibn kh., p. 175; S. Z. II, 45.
9 S. Z. I, 99.
10 Vainant al-Dīn al-Mālik, 1170. The poem quoted in the last note contains allusions which show us that this person must have been considerably older than Abu l-'Alī. From p. 289 it appears to have been a favourite of 'Abd al-Hasan, who died in 1234, when Abu l-'Alī was fifty years old; the commentator states that he was sent on an embassy to the government of Baghdad.

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[II. 10.]
would facilitate his admission to the inner circle. Besides the persons already mentioned he found a friend in Ibn Fa‘urqah, as famous as his confreres in Munattabi’s poems, to whom, on leaving Baghdad, he addressed a poetical epistle; and another in a certain Abu Bakr Ahmad Al-Sabuni, whose address he gives so accurately in Letter XV. It was in ‘Lotus-street in the quarter of the Oil-merchants’.

More important than these were the family of the Nabil, or head of the descendants of Ali, whom he may have met at Suhrawardi’s Academy. The head of the family when Abu l’Alâ entered Baghdad was Abu Ahmad Al-Husain, called ‘the Pure’ and ‘the Meritorious’; his name meets us frequently in the contemporary history, and he appears to have been a capable man, often entrusted with difficult commissions, which he discharged with ability. His eldest son Al-Murtadâ, was a poet of no great note, but of considerable renown as a theologian. The father’s honours, however, fell not to him, but to his younger brother, Al-Ra‘id, who was inferior to his brother as a theologian, but is regarded by Mohammedan critics as the greatest poet of the 971 Prophet’s line. His bulky Diwan, containing poems written from 369, 1078, when he was ten years old, to 406, the year of his death, is not only of considerable poetical merit, but forms a highly valuable supplement to the chronicles of this period. We have already seen that he played the part of literary patron on a great scale; but the same biographer who admires his liberality states that he used the administrative powers that were sometimes committed to him with great cruelty; and though he devoted his poetical talent to the flattery of the successive Caliphs and their Buyid master, he appears to have had the vanity to aspire to the Caliphate himself.

Towards the end of Junâda I in 400 A.H., when Abu l’Alâ had been some months in Baghdad, Abu Ahmad (the father) died, and

Abu l’Alâ composed a lament over him which is regarded as one of his finest performances, and which, though it complimented the son, also contained a distinct assurance that their alma were not required. This refusal to write verse professionally was doubtless deserving of respect; but Abu l’Alâ was probably deceiving thereby the object with which he went to Baghdad. For though other roads towards obtaining the means of supporting himself at Baghdad may have been open to him, that which he refused to follow was the most certain. Something perhaps, was to be got by dedication fees, or something, perhaps, by teaching—but it is probable that this profession was really overstocked at the capital, and Letter VII distinctly asserts this. Still, although in one of the odes written in Baghdad he laments his want of means and friends, it appears from other attestations that it was in his power to obtain employment there, and that he had friends both willing and able to help him. Nevertheless four months after the death of Abu Ahmad we find that he is compelled to quit Baghdad.

In a poem written after his return he assigns as the reasons for this step the news of his mother’s illness, and his diminishing resources. Perhaps however the true reason is to be found in an event to which allusion is made by the historian Abu l-Ma‘shîn. Speaking of the poet Munattabi, he mentions an ode ‘on account of which there took place what is known to have taken place between the Sharif Al-Ra‘id and Abu l’Alâ Al-Ma‘ri’. Abu l-Ma‘shîn does not elucidate this mysterious phrase any further; but one of the MS. biographies tells us what happened, substituting however for Al-Ra‘id’s name that of his brother Al-Murtada. As we have seen, Abu l’Alâ was received at this person’s salon; but it so happened that Abu l’Alâ was a passionate admirer of the poet Munattabi, while Al-Murtada had a strong dislike for that poet. Had Abu l’Alâ been wise, he would have kept his predilection to himself when in the presence of Al-Murtada; not being
so, one day when the latter was attacking Mutanabbi, our poet declared that had Mutanabbi only written one particular poem, it would have demonstrated his excellence. Al-Murtadā, on hearing this, ordered him to be dragged out of the room by the feet. He alleged as the reason for this violence that Abu 'l-'Ali must have been alluding to a verse in the same ode in which Mutanabbi says that the criticisms of inferior writers are the best proof of his own perfection. Abu 'l-'Ali must therefore have called him, Al-Murtadā, an inferior writer, under cover of this quotation. This anecdote, which is too circumstantial to be fictitious, probably gives us the real reason why Abu 'l-'Ali left Baghdad; for such a humiliation was so likely to bring others in its train that it was unsafe for him to remain. The family of the Sharifs were on a familiar footing with both sovereigns, and at times Al-Raḍżī was given dictatorial power in Baghdad. The event must have taken place within the four months specified, for Abu 'l-'Ali was far too spirited a man to write such an ode as the dirge on Abu Ahmad, if he had already undergone the insult that has been described. How far Al-Murtadā’s interpretation of his quotation was justified, or what were the motives which dictated it, cannot now be settled.

The return journey, when determined on, was made by a route resembling the third of those described by Mr. Cowper; by boat as far as Maulū—scarcely the same boat as had descended the Euphrates, which, when recovered, had probably been sent back the way it came; from Maulū by road to Ḥasanlyūyāh, Mayyāzūzān, Āmīd, Ḥarlab, Rakhāba. By this route the Euphrates is crossed at Bērētī, and at Urāfah this more northerly route separates from the more southerly which passes through Mardin. The northern route goes through some high passes, which the author’s blindness excuses him for not describing. Between Ḥasanlyūyāh and Āmīd the road was safe; elsewhere it was full of dangers, which however he seems to have escaped. He passed by Ḥarlab, where his benefactors resided, unwilling, it would seem, to

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1 Ed. Désiré, p. 269.
2 Verse 39 of Al-Ṭifālij (p. 273 (288 a. n.)); in this very year (409) he applies to Bahl al-dānish to be released of some of his office (ibid., p. 274).
3 Letter VII.
He kept up relations with the successive governors of Ha'leb by dedicating to them some of his numerous writings. To 'Aziz al-daulah, an Armenian slave of Manjistakin, one of the generals sent against Ha'leb in 394, who, having found favour with Al-Hakim, was made governor of Ha'leb in 407, Abu 'l-'Ali addressed his works called *The Horse and the Male* 1 and *Al-Ri'ay* 2; and to Sanad al-daulah, who in 414 was transferred from Apamaea to Ha'leb, he dedicated his treatise called *Samadiyyah* 3 after that governor's name. 'Aziz al-daulah, as we learn from the letters, 4 made an attempt to engage Abu 'l-'Ali as court-poet at Ha'leb—perhaps when on the death of Al-Hakim he had leisure to attend to such matters; for two years after his instalment, hearing that the Egyptian tyrant's feelings towards him had changed, 'Aziz al-daulah broke out into open rebellion and caused coins to be struck in his own name. His request was addressed to Abu 'l-'Ali through a man who afterwards, at any rate, was employed in important posts; when in the year 428 Muntakhab al-daulah was sent from Egypt 5 to restore order in Syria, the same Sadiqah Ibn Yunuf Al-Fallahi, who on the occasion with which we are dealing had communicated 'Aziz al-daulah's proposal, was sent with him as financial adviser. Abu 'l-'Ali's courteous and witty refusal of the offer made him form the subject of Letter XXIV. 'Aziz al-daulah had to content himself with the services of Mulaqad Ibn Sa'id instead. 6

Of the disciples who came to learn of him, many attained distinction; the best known to Europeans is Abu Zakariyyah of Tabris, who having studied in the Nizamiyyah College in Baghdad was recommended to pursue some special line of research under Abu 'l-'Ali, some forty years after Abu 'l-'Ali's journey. His well-known commentary on the *Hamshah* preserves some of his master's learning. 7

Abu 'l-'Ali maintained a learned correspondence with men of letters in various parts of the Mohammedan world. Letter XXVII, the most learned of the collection, is a specimen of it; but at times he would

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1 Ibn Al-'Adim (Paris MS.).
2 Ibid.
3 Letter XXIV.
4 Appendix to the History of Damascus (MS. Hunt. 126).
5 Ibn Khallikan II, 372.
6 Several more names are mentioned by Thukhaid, infra, p. 177.
seem to have been impertinent with unimportant questions, and Letter XXVI, which is somewhat obscure, is apparently addressed to some one who pestered him in this way. Like other eminent writers he was sometimes compelled to employ his pen for more practical purposes. The Saʿd al-Zand contains a poem written on behalf of a certain Abdallah Ibn al-Saʿdī,1 a secretary, whose employer had reason for suspecting his fidelity. Letter III is clearly addressed to some governor on behalf of a political exile; and Letter IV seems to show that Abu ʿl-ʿAlī’s intercession was successful. Letters XX and XL clearly have a political tendency, and with the aid of Letter XVII something like a consistent narrative may be evolved. Letter XVII is about a recommendation by the poet’s uncle of a certain Abu ʿl-Ḥasan Mohammed Ibn Saʿd al-Sinān, who was then contemplating a journey to Maʿarrah. This man’s son is mentioned as poet of note in Haleb in the year 422/1032.2 Letter XL represents Abu ʿl-Ḥasan himself as deputy-governor of Haleb in the absence of the Sultan; and the visit to Maʿarrah would appear to be an episode in a pilgrimage which he was then planning, from which Letter XL is written to dissuade him at the instance of certain other residents in Haleb who required his presence to protect them from the Greeks. This is clearly the letter to which reference is made in Letter XX, addressed to another Abu ʿl-Ḥasan son of ʿAbd al-Munim, whose father appears to have been Kaṭīb in Haleb in the year 420/1030. The letter of Abu ʿl-Ḥasan Ibn ʿAbd al-Munim to which Letter XX is an answer was clearly a request to the poet to dissuade Ibn Saʿd from staying at Maʿarrah, whence the words ‘albeit the people of Maʿarrah will not relish what it contains’ can easily be interpreted. We shall probably be right in dating these letters about 412. For in Letter XXXVI the same Abu ʿl-Ḥasan Ibn Saʿdī figures as having conveyed a literary proposal for the ‘Sultan’ to Abu ʿl-ʿAlī; and the Sultan of that letter is certainly ʿAziz al-daʿulah, to whom we know the work called The Horse and the Male to have been dedicated. The ‘Sultan’ of Letter XL is probably the same, and indeed ʿAziz al-daʿulah was the only ruler of Haleb since the days of the Ham- 

1 Ibn Al-ʿAlī, in his Flimsy sketch of the history of Haleb (ms. 427) calls ʿAbd al-daʿulah a Hambid; but this is an error.  
2 Sinān, 78.  
3 ʿAbd al-Munim, ib. supra.  
4 Published by Zien, l.c. 117.  
5 Ibn Al-ʿAlī, ib. supra.  
6 Published by Zien, l.c. 119.  
7 ʿAbd al-Munim (ib supra), anno 419.  
9 Quoted by Ibn Shihab, who was descended from Abu ʿl-ʿAlī’s family, and was secretary to Nār al-dīn (Egypt) to the effect that Abu ʿl-ʿAlī was offered the contents of the treasury in Maʿarrah honorably, but refused to take them.
of a liberal man, helping persons of his own rank with gifts. Before the year 429 the poet Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali son of 'Abd Al-Wahid sent to him requesting a present of wine; this Abu 'l-'Ali's principles forbade him to send, but he sent some money instead. In the year 430, as we have seen, he entertained the Kadi Abu Mohammed 'Abd Al-Wahhab on his way from Egypt to Baghdad. It is indeed unlikely that the disciples who crowded to Rastah from distant countries to hear Abu 'l-'Ali left their teacher without some solid mark of their approbation. In the best days of the Caliphate a student at Baghdad had paid 500 dinars annually to the grammarian Ibn Al-'Arabi for instruction in the subjects which Abu 'l-'Ali afterwards professed. Although Rastah was not Baghdad, and the fifth century was different from the second, it is difficult to suppose that Abu 'l-'Ali's instruction went entirely unrewarded. Whether in 430, when Rastah was taken by the Egyptian forces, the poet, who was then advanced in years, suffered or not, we do not know.

The long period of his retirement was spent, partly, as we have seen, in teaching; but chiefly in writing. A certain Abu 'l-Hasan 'Ali Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abi Hashim acted as his amanuensis, taking no reward for his services; it would be interesting to find memoirs by this Boswell, if he left any. Another of the poet's helpers was named Abu 'l-Majid, perhaps the same Abu 'l-Majid who is mentioned by Bikhazri among the poets of Rastah. That it was not always easy to get amanuensis capable of satisfactorily executing such skilled labour as copying from his dictation, we learn from the letters, and could have guessed without them.

The long list of his works, now published after Al-Dhahabi, gives proof of great industry, although it would seem that Abu 'l-'Ali was disposed to overrate their quantity. As has happened with many authors, the work of which he thought least was his most popular.

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1 Letters IX.
2 Ibn Khallikan I. 442.
3 Ibn Khall. I. 384; II. 480.
4 Aqains N. 45.
5 There are occasional references to presents received by the author in the letters, e.g. p. 34.
6 Infra, p. 170.
7 Infra, p. 136.
8 British Museum MS.
9 Infra, p. 125.
10 Infra, pp. 170, 171. Fadlan also gives a list which in some respects may be more accurate than Dhahabi's. See Appendix.

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THE LUZİMYİ YAT. xxxv

production; the early poems which, with some few composed shortly after his return from Baghdad, were collected in a volume called Safih al-Zand, or Primitiae, both won and retained a degree of popularity which none of his other books ever secured. Tabrizi, in the preface to his commentary on them, states that on coming to Rastah he requested the author to read them with him; but this Abu 'l-'Ali refused to do, on the ground that he had 'boasted' in them (after the fashion of Arabic poets); and that his mature performances were better worth study. Tabrizi, nevertheless, composed a commentary explaining them, which is not the only commentary on them, nor the best. The number of MS. copies of the Safih al-Zand in European libraries is evidence of their undiminished popularity; rhetoricians frequently illustrate from them the elegance of style; and a poet of the eighth century of Islam took the trouble to turn into a eulogy of the Prophet Mohammed one of the odes in the Safih al-Zand, in which the irreverence of the poet Mutanabbi had been impaired or outdone.

The best known of Abu 'l-'Ali's works after the Safih al-Zand is the large collection of poems called Luzimiyyat, from the nature of the verification, in which every verse of a poem is made to rhyme in two consonants instead of one, whereby the difficulty of manipulation, which in all the Arabic metres is considerable, is very greatly increased. These poems were composed at intervals during the third period of Abu 'l-'Ali's long life, but were edited and elucidated by himself. Their contents are well known in Europe from the repeated descriptions of them by Von Kremer. For the most part they consist of penitential and ascetic reflections in the style of Abu 'l-Atthiyah; of thoughts on death and the mutability of fortune, and exhortations to virtue and humility. Many passages however are devoted to the promotion of the poet's peculiar tenets, called by his biographers

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1 The latest poem was composed 430 A.H.
2 Bisotun MS.
3 The poems to which he refers is probably S. Z. I. 62. Ibn 'Ali in his Tarikh quotes examples of such a mode of writing from Abu 'l-'Ali. (Margin of Middle-cut of English II. 317-318.)
4 The author of the Tawab severely criticises Tabrizi's work. See 'Ali Khallakan. 
6 Ibn Al-Waraj: see Ibn 'Aljah, at supra, p. 382. 
7 S. Z. I. 30.
with the charge of heresy, Abu 'l-'Alî replied to one of his accusers that the charge was false, and had been started by persons who envied him; which reply led to the retort that there was little to envy about a man who had forfeited both worlds. Another anecdote is interesting, as taking us into the poet's lecture-room. A poet of Ma'arrah, of little repute, called Abu 'l-Kâsîm Al-Munjîrî, entered the room, and was requested by the lecturer to read—the subject was apparently the Koran. The new-comer read the verse 'Whose is blind in this world shall be even blinder and more lost in the next'; with evident reference to Abu 'l-'Alî's misfortune and the rumours current about him. When the lecture was over, Abu 'l-'Alî complimented him on his orthodoxy, but sent him away with a biting epigram.

Not all however judged Abu 'l-'Alî quite so harshly. One of his pupils, who afterwards acquired a great reputation for sanctity, and who belonged to the same family as had helped Abu 'l-'Alî when at Bagdad, when asked on his return from Ma'arrah what he thought of his teacher's orthodoxy, expressed himself satisfied with it. Another, who afterwards attained the post of Kâdidî, or judge, declared that he had heard Abu 'l-'Alî, at a time when he fancied no one was by, recite the Koran in a way which left no doubt of the reality of his belief. Eminent Syrians as well as savants of other countries in later times wrote books in defence of the poet. 

1 Ibn Khallikân I. 437. The discussion of the orthodoxy of Abu 'l-'Alî is fuller than elsewhere. 
2 Ibn Khallikân I. 439. The discussion of the orthodoxy of Abu 'l-'Alî is fuller than elsewhere. 
3 Ed. Fig. L 213. 
4 Ma'arrah. 
5 Al-Munjîrî, who said that all who attacked the poet had never met him, while all those who had come in contact with him admirèd him. His book was called Al-Adil out Al-Tarufîrî, etc. Another work by an unknown author was called Tarîqat-ul-warda 'us yakhli Al-Munjîrî (preface to S.T., p. 5). Ibn Al-'Alî's work is mentioned by the author of F. W., in his notice of the Alephite scholar. The work of Sadr Al-dîn Al-Sulî (452-536), if Ibn Khallikân is to be believed, called shamsî 'us alm-warda Al-Munjîrî, which is probably the source of the stray anecdotes that have been collected from Ibn Khallikân, was not, apparently, of an apologetic character. Sulî was a pupil of Tahirî, and so had good opportunities of